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**NLRB PROMOTES INDUSTRIAL
DEMOCRACY FOR 70 YEARS**

National Labor Relations Board Chairman Robert J. Battista declared that the nation's primary labor law has been a success for 70 years by "being true to its principles, and yet flexible to change." He said:

Our mission has been to resolve labor disputes peacefully by providing an orderly regulatory process within which labor, management, and employees can resolve their differences. Fulfilling this important mandate has been an immense task but we have succeeded for 70 years and will be successful in the future.

In a speech on May 20 commemorating the 70th anniversary of the National Labor Relations Board, Chairman Battista attributed the Agency's success and longevity to the democratic fundamental principles inherent in the law it administers, including:

- 1) freedom of choice to be represented by a union or not;
- 2) democracy in the workplace through rule of the majority; and
- 3) participation in the workplace through free collective-bargaining and voluntary agreements.

"Together, these principles constitute a 'rule of law' in the workplace that fosters and yields industrial stability," Chairman Battista stated, adding:

The statute's success can be attributed to its enduring principles, while at the same time allowing for flexibility and change in the dynamic labor relations field. The law was meant to ebb and flow, to change from time to time within the boundaries set by the statute and subject to review by the courts.

The setting for the speech was a conference sponsored by New York University in New York City. The NLRB is a Federal agency that administers the National Labor Relations Act by conducting elections to determine whether or not employees want union representation; and investigating and remedying unfair labor practices by employers and unions.

During the 70 years of its existence, the NLRB has processed over 2 million cases, issued over 65,000 published decisions in adjudicated cases, and collected \$1.67 billion in backpay. It also has conducted 415,000 elections involving over 40 million workers. The median time from petition to election presently is 42 days, and about 98% of all unfair labor practice cases filed in the field offices are resolved in a median of 91 days.

Addressing critics of the Board, the Chairman said:

Often the Board's critics fail to recognize that our job is to enforce the law as written. They also don't seem to understand or neglect to mention that Congress established the Board's structure anticipating that changing administrations would appoint persons who are free, within statutory limits, to reflect the labor policy of the administration making the appointments. At the same time, reasonable stability in Board decisions is necessary so that companies, unions, and employees can understand and follow the law.

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